

facebook

Instagram

twitter

tumblr

FOSTA





the CAPITALIST oppression

or "how the tech companies are taking away your right to free expression"

“ *[The immense tech industry]* is new in the American experience. The total influence—economic, political, even spiritual is felt in every city, every office, every *[household in America]*. We recognize the imperative need for this development, yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. Our toil, resources, and livelihood are all involved. So is the very structure of our society. We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence—whether sought or unsought—by the *[big tech industry]*. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of *[technology with]* our *[civil liberties and constitutional protections]* so that *[privacy, liberty,]* and *[connectivity]* can prosper together. ”

~President Dwight D. Eisenhower's farewell address to the nation, a few words replaced.

IN HIS FAREWELL ADDRESS TO THE NATION,



President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned the country about the rapid rise of the “military-industrial complex.” The above quotation is part of that address, certain verbiage replaced to fully illustrate how that warning fully applies to the rapid rise of the technology industry. As we have seen in recent months, both our liberties and democratic processes have been threatened by the most prolific of the technology companies: social media.

And while social media intended to be only a casual convenience, the **greed** and insatiable lust for influence and **instant gratification** by both its creators and users has allowed social media to permeate virtually every aspect of our lives.

Over the last year or so it has been revealed how the social media companies are at best unprepared for the immense power and influence they have acquired, at worst downright abusive of that power. Just recently the *New York Times* reported how Facebook allowed other apps like Spotify and Netflix read your private messages. It goes without saying the other infractions admitted to by the social media companies over the last year should be recognized as “grave implications.”

The gravest of all those implications, though, is one that gets little mention in the media because the subject is just so taboo in America. It’s the suppression of sexuality, nudity, “**adult content**,” and anything having to do with sex. I say that this is the gravest of implications because creation and consumption of nude art, pornography, erotica, or whatever pigeon hole one tries to put on it is the **ultimate exercise and example** of the most important right granted to us by the constitution: the right of **free expression**.



how to censor the internet

The new rules imposed by Facebook's new community standards effectively bar anyone from **even talking about anything sexual**, much less sharing and enjoying any sort of artistic expression of sexuality—no matter how censored it is. Tumblr just issued its own crackdown which will probably result in a sizeable majority of its users being banned (yours truly included). Instagram, of course, is owned by Facebook and will follow suit. I can only hope that Twitter does not jump on this censorship bandwagon—though Twitter is far from innocent of any suppressive efforts (shadowbans, clocking back post visibility, etc). The what has been covered extensively, but the why—the most important question—is what will be addressed here. This will address why you should be the **alert citizenry** that compels the technology sector to respect the rights of literally millions of people that are virtually forced to use their platforms.

Before delving too far in: I say that we are forced to use these platforms because there is **no viable alternative**. The argument that “we sign up and use it so therefore are consenting to our content being censored and dictated to us” in my opinion is invalid because there is no other option. In today's world, being connected is essential to leading a successful, rewarding life. We have all allowed big-tech social media to be so essential to our lives that we will be “left behind” if we don't have a presence on it. Since Facebook et al has monopolized social media, it's the place we all have to be and we have to grudgingly agree to its community standards. That means that we are **allowing Facebook to shape our lives** outside of Facebook which means we are allowing Facebook to dictate what's acceptable outside of Facebook.

They lured us in with the promise of an amazing, inclusive platform with which we could express ourselves, spread our message throughout the world, and make connections we otherwise couldn't. **Once we were in, trapped, they tightened down the clamps.**

Facebook's new community standards effectively force anyone who wants to embrace sexuality into the shadows. They don't want you talking about sexual encounters. They don't want you sharing nude-anything. They don't want people like me discovering new models to photograph. They don't want models to let producers or photographers like me know that they are seeking to be photographed. Facebook wants to drive the “adult industry” back underground.

Why?

The adult industry, erotic art, pornography, and sex work are disruptive. **We are disruptive** especially to social media companies who feed their coffers with advertising dollars.

If you're paying attention to, much less paying for, an indulgence into the erotic sphere, you are not paying attention to the advertisements for bullshit that you don't need or even want. Facebook, et al, are only interested in catering to advertisers who have mastered the art of **manipulating** you into thinking you "need" whatever it is that they're selling. Most of these things that they're telling you that you need you really don't need at all, or even necessarily want. A year from now, if you buy it, you won't even remember it, if whatever it is doesn't break or fail because of its planned obsolescence.

Granted, there are many elements of the adult industry that are fraudulent and deceitful, but they're simply taking lessons from the other barons of free-market capitalism. These fraudulent actors are used as the scapegoats as to why porn/erotica/sex-work is not allowed in the "mainstream." Punishing all for the actions of a few.

The "mainstream" wants to keep you as distracted as it can from indulging in your sexual desires/fantasies because it knows that the sexual impulse is the strongest human impulse, second only to the survival impulse. **Your sexual impulse is the hardest thing for an external element to control.** And since there is only a finite amount of time and money for you to spend whilst scrolling your smartphone whilst trying to escape the monotony of your miserable day job, the free market vulture capitalists must capture as much of it as possible. Remember: the most important thing to shareholders—who nine times out of ten couldn't give two shits about the product they're investing in—is **constant growth**. If a company or product isn't experiencing growth, its time to sell the shares and find the next growth opportunity.

So how can social media, without admitting outright discrimination, bar anything sexual in nature from being shared or "going viral" or garnering genuine interest from those masses that need to be advertised to? How can they be distracted from the most disruptive element in our society?

The answer is FOSTA & SESTA.





If you don't know what FOSTA & SESTA are, Google it. There are articles that explain it in much better terms than I can. In summary, though they were intended to combat sex trafficking and non-consensual sex work, **they do nothing but broaden existing laws with obscurity** and bring legal sex work (like creating adult movies or photographs) into a realm of difficulty and uncertainty. Moreover, it makes large platforms like Facebook and Tumblr take sweeping actions of censorship—even though the things that they are censoring are not in any violation of sex trafficking or prostitution laws.

The only thing that FOSTA/SESTA did was push sex workers further into the shadows. **Sex workers no longer have platforms on which they can screen potential clients, communicate with each other, or otherwise promote their work safely.** Mind you: these are not trafficked persons; these are sex workers who do sex work by choice. This includes adult models, strippers, fetish providers, and other types of sex workers that are not involved in what is defined as prostitution. They provide a service to millions of people who seek outlets for their sexual desires, for a multitude of reasons—healthy outlets that involve and promote consent and safety.

Artists like myself and the women I work with are also suffering

from the effects of FOSTA/SESTA due to the overreaching actions that the big-tech companies have taken in response to these two pieces of legislation. Even though we are creating art and visual media as opposed to “physical” services, the tech industry considers our work sex work as well.

You, the consumer, are also a victim of this. You are being forced into the shadows as well. We have all become marginalized. We, purveyors and patrons of all things erotic, are a marginalized community. We are being suppressed and discriminated upon. And I'm even going to go as far to say that our constitutional and civil rights are being violated. That goes for both creators of erotic content and consumers of it.

Literally MILLIONS of people desire to consume what we create and distribute. So, by censoring us, ostracizing us, discriminating on us, these companies are doing the same to the regular folks who seek to see and consume what we create. They are depriving our fans (and us, for that matter) of liberty and the pursuit of happiness—the very foundation of the United States of America. They are preventing us from exercising our First Amendment right to express ourselves.

FOSTA/SESTA has enabled the tech companies—who are protected from discrimination and First Amendment lawsuits since they are “non-state actors”—to crack down on our ability to

reach and inform the people who care about what we produce. This forces consumers to go to hotbeds of piracy like offshore registered Tube-sites that cost production houses thousands of dollars a month, millions per year. Who runs tube sites?

At best, venture capitalists doing the same thing social media companies are doing: having a place to lure you in so they can collect advertising revenue. At worst: **front companies for laundering dirty money.** Think about the end-game of this: the more producers who lose money at creating the content you find on tube-sites, the less content gets created. **Eventually it all dries up and the even the tube sites won't be around.**

This is exactly what the mainstream wants.

**PROHIBITION ISN'T
THERE TO PROTECT
ANYONE**



FOSTA/SESTA could be considered akin the Volstead Act, especially given how big-tech is reacting to it. We saw how well prohibition worked. Was prohibition really about keeping people safe and the betterment of society? No, it was about control. This is the same thing.

Fightthenewdrug.org cites studies on how “porn affects the brain” and states that “porn consumption is actually linked to poor mental health outcomes...when [porn consumers] engage in a pattern of ‘self-concealment’...This pattern not only hurts their relationships and leaves them feeling lonely, but also makes them more vulnerable to emotional and psychological problems.”

Typical of this type of propaganda, porn is branded as the scapegoat when in fact the psychological issue at hand is the “self concealment,” self-concealment which is encouraged by this type of propaganda. It is obvious that people who consume porn have certain sexual fantasies and desires that they satiate by consuming porn.

When these desires are repressed, people will suffer from depression, self-aggrandizement, insecurity, etc. **The desires themselves will not simply go away** if porn does. So then we ask how will these people with whatever desire/fantasy they have seek satisfaction of that

desire? Will they cheat on their wives? Will they commit sex crimes? What will they hide from their loved ones if it isn't watching porn?

This is the same line of thought that discriminates against homosexuality: homosexuality leads to self concealment; homosexuality is a sin; homosexuality is a health crisis; homosexuality is destructive to families. All one has to do is replace the word “homosexuality” with “porn.” We've evolved enough to understand that homosexuality is not a crime and its not okay to discriminate against it, so why the hell can't we when it comes to porn?

What the real issue is: Why are people judged by their friends and family for having certain sexual tastes? Why are people being judged for the type of entertainment they choose to consume. Who fucking cares? Am I less of a person because I like spy thrillers but you like comedies? It is the same line of thought.

We are only taught that porn is taboo due to an archaic mentality passed down generation to generation. It is programmed guilt being further perpetuated. It stems from an out of date belief system that fewer and fewer people buy into now anyway. Sexual repression began with the Cath-

olic Church in its efforts to make Europe **a male-dominated society**. The Protestant reformation made sexuality even more repressed in some regards, and it was Protestant puritans who first settled America. What's interesting and mind-blowing is that while religion (particularly Catholicism) is more prevalent in Europe than it is in America, **Europeans tend to be more accepting of nudity and sexuality**. For some reason our brand of Christianity hasn't fully accepted that maybe *God really doesn't give a shit about how*

we fuck or how many clothes we wear. We are really the most prudish of the developed world when it comes to any sort of display of (particularly female) nudity. Why? The only answer can be that we're still trying to hold desperately on to a **patriarchal society in which women are second class citizens**. American Christianity espouses a belief system that is not actually based on the tenants of the Bible; behind it is the farce of "free-market capitalism" where the top of the food chain is given the power to dictate who

or what makes it and what doesn't. Free market capitalism has nothing to do with Christianity. **If anything, Jesus was a communist**. Why then, do so many free-market capitalists and free-market-capitalist loving politicians hide behind their Bibles when pushing their agendas? Simply because historically, religion has been the most effective tool to control the masses.

And the goal of controlling sex? That's rooted in psychology. These free market capitalists (and right-wing "Christians" for that matter), look at sex in skewed eco-



nomic terms. A psychologist named Roy Baumeister of Florida State University has taken up an interesting study which explains this sexual-economic theory. According to this study, economically speaking, women control sex, because they are less motivated by sex than men are. Typically, the supply of men looking for sex exceeds the supply of women looking for sex. Therefore, the value of women consenting to sex is higher than men consenting to sex. With regards to the porn/sex industry, men will typically flock to following and supporting women independently provid-

ing their sexual services. **Female sex is the most valuable asset in the adult industry**. Without it there would be no adult industry. Female sexual power cannot ever be truly taken away, because the demand outweighs the supply. The most feasible and manipulatable way to wrest the power away from women is **simply to restrict and/or destroy the marketplace**.

This then has the added benefit of keeping the disruption that erotica provides away

from the platforms that everyone flocks to, **so the consumer can stay focused on feeding the coffers** of the free-market-capitalists.

While on the surface there may seem to be some logic to this theory, to say it is flawed would be an understatement. If there is an "economics of sex" it is only there because our society has made it so. It is this unsound line of thinking that is what perpetuates abuse and the thriving of patriarchal oppression of women.

So who is pulling the strings?

FOSTA/SESTA received bipartisan support in congress and the Senate and was backed by the Internet Association (of which Facebook and Google are founders). **The bills' instigators were both Republicans** with anti-abortion, anti-Obamacare, and pro-trickle-down-economics positions. So, before anyone tries to say that this is the "politically correct liberal agenda" at work, *it was not*. Also, one of the bill's backers was the Faith and Freedom Coalition, an organization dedicated to promoting the evangelical Christian agenda.

What's most alarming, however, is that **Facebook alone lobbied almost ten million dollars (\$9,790,000.00)** in the first three quarters of 2018. Its LD-2 Disclosure forms describe its lobbying activity in vague terms like "discussions related to technology and the Internet including privacy, security, and research; online advertising, content and platform transparency efforts." And though FOSTA/SESTA passed in April 2018, it is cited in the Q1, Q2, and Q3 disclosures. Senators and Representatives listed as being lobbied include Jeff Sessions, Luther Strange, and John Warner, all Republicans who take puritanical stances on social issues.

Now, we cannot be sure from this data alone if Facebook, the Internet Association, et al were lobbying in favor or against FOSTA/SESTA, but given that they backed and came out in support of the bills, we can infer that they did lobby in its favor.

Yes, Facebook, a corporation often painted as "liberal" **spent millions of dollars lobbying anti-progressive politicians for an anti-progressive bill.**

The point is, this bill was not intended to protect children from being sex trafficked. This bill was created to aide in pushing the adult industry as a whole into the shadows. This bill was created so it could further an agenda of sexual repression overall. **And it was masqueraded as a "progressive" bill.**



What these bills actually did was make it harder for erotica and sex work to be created and proliferated in a safe and consensual manner.



proving ground

Issues related to porn tends to be the opening salvo in the battles for free speech. As I said earlier, **pornography is the ultimate exercise of freedom of expression.** Eisenhower's warning, that I opened this article with, pertains to the tech industry every bit—if not more—as much as it pertains to the military-industrial-complex.

While many people will disregard this article as pro-porn propaganda, what needs to be considered is the root of the argument. **What's going on here is a violation of our First Amendment right.** Not just the right or pornographers and sex workers, but everybody's right. I say this because if they can successfully censor erotica, where does the line get drawn? What else will be considered too obscene to be proliferated on the big tech platforms? Moreover, **who gets to make those considerations?**

Facebook's community standards state that: "we restrict the display of nudity or sexual activity because some people in our community may be sensitive to this type of content." *Some* people. And so we have to make a rule that pertains to all people?

What happened to personal responsibility? Facebook already provides the ability to hide posts you don't want to see, block people you don't want to hear from, and age control filters for both users and business pages. If you don't want to see nudity, sexual content, whatever, then **simply don't look at it.** Maybe I don't like seeing your Bible verses. Maybe I don't like your stupid inflammatory memes. Maybe I don't want to hear that you're sick and dying of your latest cold. So I'll unfriend you, block your posts, whatever. Life goes on and I'll go look at the stuff I want to see.

Like FOSTA/SESTA, there is this uniquely American thing where we must find a preventative solution to everything when in fact **there is no such thing as a preventative solution to anything.**

Shit happens. We can't prevent everything. It would be nice if we could, but we can't. Instead of trying to punish everyone for the crimes of a few, we should

focus on punishing harshly and severely the perpetrators of said crimes, raising awareness of what they've done. In the case of FOSTA/SESTA, **the prevention effort may actually allow perpetrators of sex trafficking to more easily victimize people** who would otherwise have a "safe-zone" in which to operate.

And to those who say "prostitution is illegal" you should remember two things: **sex work is not synonymous**

with prostitution, and though prostitution is illegal, it will never be eradicated. It's the oldest profession, and there will always be a demand for it. So maybe we should be exploring and discussing the legalization of prostitution, so it can be performed and enjoyed safely.

Back to the First Amendment: how are we okay with allowing big-tech companies—who's stated goals are to give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together and to share and express what matters to

them—to **prohibit certain communities who would like to share and express what matters to them** from doing so? Is this not a violation of our constitutional right to free expression?

The founders wrote that "Congress shall make no law...abridging the freedom of speech." Granted, Congress has made no law—though it is arguable that FOSTA/SESTA teeters close to the edge of it—abridging freedom of speech. But it has also made **no law preventing private corporations**, who wield more power than the government, who have the power to influence the government, **from infringing on the rights of free expression.**

I think that if the authors of the First Amendment had known what big-tech was going to turn into, the verbiage would have been a little different. The intent of the First Amendment was to **ensure that the people's right to express and consume what they choose was not infringed upon.** That should include an entity that seeks to permeate and dominate our lives.

I will repeat what I said above: if big-tech is able to successfully censor all things sex related, **what will be the next thing** that they will censor and/or influence? Why should we allow them to not only dictate what we say, what we see, and what we do? And further, why should we allow them to dictate to us *to the benefit of only a few?* A few offended people? A few bastions of capitalism? *Are we really going to allow this to happen for the sake of convenient connectivity?* Connectivity that actually may be harming real and actual relationships?



these are the
questions
an
alert citizenry
should be
asking itself



Instagram

tumblr.